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WHO'S ISOLATIONIST NOW?

By William Henry Chamberlin

It is high time to debunk and bury once and for all the stereotyped fallacy that a villain called American isolationism has been and still may be the principal obstacle to the achievement of a perfect world order, with a foolproof assurance of peace through collective security. This fallacy is part of the intellectual stock-in-trade of busy speakers for international do-gooder organizations in this country and for British and continental publicists who like to lecture Americans on their "responsibilities". (A slightly cynical friend of long experience in foreign countries remarks that, whenever he hears this word "responsibilities", he reaches anxiously for his pocketbook.)

To represent America today as isolationist or likely to lapse into isolationism is almost impossible. We are fighting almost singlehanded a war in Korea. The presence of American troops in Germany makes American involvement in any conflict growing out of a Soviet attack on Western Europe inevitable. This is the assumption not only of the two leading candidates for the Presidency, but also of Senator Taft, who has repeatedly expressed the opinion that America, under the North Atlantic Pact, is obligated to go to war if there is a Soviet invasion of Europe.

Even if one looks back to the twenties and early thirties, to the period when America was supposedly reposing in selfish and benighted isolation from the needs and problems of the world, one finds that this stereotype is not in accordance with the facts. The United States took the initiative in promoting the Washington treaties in 1922, with their provisions for agreed limitation of naval armaments and for the observance of the territorial integrity and administrative sovereignty of China.

It is no accident that American names are attached to the two efforts to bring some element of financial sanity into the chaos of the reparations situation — the Dawes Plan and the Young Plan. It was generally agreed that new capital was needed to repair the ravages of war, and American money was lent from China to Peru. Not all these loans were wise and prudent and America's lending and foreign trade policy was not on speaking terms with its high tariff policy.

But there was in no sense, under the Administrations of Harding, Coolidge and Hoover, that attitude of blind and stupid indifference to the situation in the outside world

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which the stereotype assumes. America did what it could by means of persuasion and example to promote all-around reduction in armaments.

American aid in humanitarian relief projects was outstanding and does not in the least correspond with the pattern of selfish preoccupation with our own needs which some of our national breastbeaters like to represent as typical of the American spirit. One of the most eloquent passages in J. M. Keynes's *Economic Consequences of the Peace* points the contrast between the bickering over frontiers by Allied diplomats in Paris and the practical humanity of Herbert Hoover's American Relief Administration, which successfully fought off disease and starvation over a vast area of Central and Eastern Europe.

THE MAJORITY OF THE American people, until Pearl Harbor created a state of war, were isolationists in only one sense, in the desire to isolate themselves from war. This desire was systematically and successfully sabotaged by the Roosevelt Administration.

Now that the great crusade is over, now that Stalin poses a threat greater than any ever represented by Hitler, now that cold war and vast military expenditure may be taken for granted for an indefinite period of time, even if the tragic alternative of a Third World War is averted, one wonders how the individuals and groups which worked hard and successfully to get America into war in 1940 and 1941 feel about their handiwork.

The fiction of an American government observing neutrality and seeking to maintain peace has been dissipated by Beard, Morgenstern, Osborn, Tansill and other historians of the new revisionist school. With proper allowance for the impossibility of knowing with certainty what would have happened if a different spirit had prevailed in Administration councils in the critical period 1931-1941, two points seem increasingly clear.

First, the present situation in Europe could not well have been worse and might have been much more favorable if Hitler's first blows had fallen on the Soviet Union, not on the nations of Western Europe. And this would almost certainly have occurred if Great Britain had not made its rash and unrealizable commitment to defend Poland.

Second, a Far Eastern situation in which the Japanese, the Russians, the Chinese Nationalists and the Chinese Communists had been left to fight and intrigue among and against each other to their hearts' content could not conceivably have led to worse results, from the standpoint of American interests, than what we see in the Orient today. The disadvantage of this situation for the United States is aggravated by the helplessness of Japan, which is no longer able to play the role of counterweight to Soviet imperialism and Chinese Communism.

The easy assumption of the past that the failure of schemes of collective security to work could be blamed on American isolationism no longer possesses a shred of validity.

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For twice since the end of the war America has done its full share, by the rules of collective security, without getting more than grudging token cooperation from other nations which were supposedly committed to the same ideal.

The war in Korea has been a UN war and a US fight, with America supplying about 95% of the ground forces involved and a corresponding proportion of the casualties. There were votes in the United Nations which authorized resistance to the act of aggression launched on June 25, 1950, and the subsequent crossing of the 38th Parallel. But effective action to back up these votes has been lacking.

Indeed the spectacle of weakness, division, confusion and downright cowardice in the UN after the Red Chinese intervention was certainly calculated to incite, rather than discourage, future acts of aggression. It is not only that the military contributions of the other UN members have been non-existent or of a very limited character. What is even more disheartening, perhaps, is that the political line adopted by the governments which are nominally associated with the United States in the Korean fighting has been of such a character as to make a quick and decisive ending of hostilities impossible.

Among these measures, which should certainly have been applied after the Chinese Communist regime threw all its strength into an effort to destroy the UN forces in Korea, were blockade of the China coast, bombing of strategic targets in Manchuria and China and all possible aid to the nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-Shek in Formosa and to anti-Communist guerrillas on the mainland. Virtually nothing has been done along these lines. Pressure from other members of the UN is not the only factor that has left the American people face to face with the bleak prospect of a bloody stalemate in Korea. But this pressure has certainly been an important factor.

EVEN MORE SERIOUS, perhaps, has been the slow, dragging tempo of European defense plans. Here Americans are surely entitled to ask: "Who is isolationist now?" There is overwhelming evidence, with the facts and figures of the recently announced new Soviet Five Year Plan as the latest exhibit, that both the Soviet Union and its satellite states are on a war economy basis.

It is true that the United States is now producing approximately twice as much as the Soviet Union hopes to produce in 1955, three times as much, if the calculation is made on a *per capita* basis. And the industrial productive resources of Western Europe are well in excess of anything the satellite states are likely to develop within any predictable future. On the other hand a Communist state, imposing a minimum standard of living on its subjects, can and does siphon off a much higher proportion of its output for military purposes

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than a free country, accustomed to take for granted many comforts and even luxuries.

The United States has taken steps unprecedented in its history in an effort to promote and bolster European defense. Under the North Atlantic Treaty it has entered a defensive alliance with most of the nations outside the iron curtain. The increased American forces in Germany, the growing American air and naval power in the Mediterranean, the American bombing units stationed in Great Britain, are tangible proofs that this is no paper alliance.

It would, of course, be naive to attribute the American bolstering of Europe's defenses to purely altruistic motives. In the modern world of shrinking distance and expanding striking power the fall of Western Europe to the Kremlin would be a grave threat to American security.

But if the defense of Europe is properly a strong secondary interest of the United States it is, or should be, a primary interest of all Europeans who are not Communists. It is clear that Communism operates on a uniform pattern. There would be just as capacious slave labor camps for businessmen, large and small, for priests and pastors and intellectuals, even for socialists, in Germany and France and Scandinavia as there now are in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania.

But many Europeans seem to assume that it is up to the United States to undertake the entire burden of their defense, even that they are somehow doing the United States a favor by providing for their own defense. Only a few months have passed since the Lisbon conference of the NATO powers fixed what was supposed to be an irreducible minimum program of common defense. But, as the sober and reliable *Manchester Guardian* wrote in a recent editorial:

"Since February, governments one by one — Britain among them — have slipped away from the Lisbon undertakings, and apparently little effort has been made to consult through the permanent machinery."

Both Britain and France have been industriously whittling down their defense plans. Belgium, following near mutinies in the army, abolished its two year service law when other European countries refused to match it. There is unrealistic but formidable opposition in Germany to any rearmament.

The danger today is not that America will "go isolationist", but that America will be left holding the bag of a policy of all-out commitment to European defense which is feasible only if the continental European peoples, especially the French and the Germans, make a far greater effort than they seem disposed to make at the present time.

Mr. Chamberlin has just returned from a trip to Europe.

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HUMAN EVENTS

FRANK C. HANIGHEN, *Editor* FRANK CHODOROV, *Associate Editor*

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Enigma of Taft: Complete confusion rules over the current discussion about whether or not Taft will go on the stump for Eisenhower. Last week, a meeting between the General and the Senator had been arranged. Then the meeting failed to take place. What had happened?

The true story is this:

It was agreed that the meeting between Eisenhower and Taft would be without any publicity. The Senator was to fly from Canada to New York to meet Ike. But several days before the scheduled event, Governor Sherman Adams of the Eisenhower organization blurted out the news to the press. We believe he did so with no malice or guile, but through sheer thoughtlessness. However, it is possible that Taft thought otherwise.

In any case, the Senator abruptly cancelled the meeting. He doubtless had visions of photographers snapping himself and the General in what would be merely a campaign publicity stunt, aimed at advertising party harmony. The Senator would like to see "harmony", but knows the matter is more complicated than posing before cameras. In fact, during his vacation in the Province of Quebec, he has developed a number of thoughts about the present campaign and his relation to it that can't be simplified in any brief, perfunctory manner. Here are the facts:

(1) The Senator has no intention of making speeches for the General which might be embarrassingly contradicted by something Ike would say the very next day; or which might actually be disavowed by the General. "Mr. Republican" can see no advantage for the GOP if such an anomalous situation takes place.

(2) The Senator wants an understanding with the General on certain policies before he would take the stump. He wants written assurance that the General will support the Taft-Hartley Act without any qualification; and that, if Ike is elected, he will really stick to a $60 billion budget ceiling for 1954. Finally he wants to know what role is contemplated for Thomas E. Dewey. The Senator will remain very dissatisfied unless and until Taft's friends are invited to play big roles in the campaign, and thereafter in the Government if Ike should be elected.

(3) The Senator, of course, as a good Republican would like to do anything which will effectively help the Party. He wants to help his brother Charles P. Taft, candidate for the Ohio governorship, and Senator John W. Bricker, running for re-election in the same state. A U.P. dispatch of September 2 says he will speak for these two candidates and for the heads of the ticket early in October, in Ohio. But that does not clearly envisage "taking the stump" for Ike.

It should be emphasized that Taft feels very keenly his obligation and responsibility to two groups: (1) the 280 delegates who stood by him to the last in the convention; and (2) above all to the millions of people who backed — not so much the Senator personally — as his policies. He has in mind those 25,000 letters that came to his office after his nomination defeat — letters of condolence, congratulation, dedication to the cause, etc. It would be surprising if Taft did not realize that, unless he sticks to his stated views on policies, no stumping he could do for Ike would be likely to win many votes for the Ike ticket.

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Summer in Springfield: Many of Ike's present troubles can be blamed on no one else but Ike himself: the biggest, of course, is his appalling surrender on the real issues of the campaign.

However, this may be said in Ike's behalf. Some of the circumstances of his present plight spring to a certain extent from press treatment of the Stevenson campaign. Indeed, a considerable portion of the working press, in an indirect way, is giving Ike "the business". They gave Taft the "business" in a crude way — misreporting or slanting or suppression. This time it is subtler. Often it's more effective to help the opponent of the man they want to get than to go after the latter frontally. We owe the following account to a journalist who went away very much shocked from a visit to Adlai's campaign headquarters at Springfield, Illinois:

"It was at one of Stevenson's press conferences, a pretty dull affair until I thought I'd give it some news value. I had been a little tired of watching Stevenson unchallenged needle Ike about the latter's support of McCarthy and Jenner. I asked him whether he was supporting Mr. Martin Dies in the latter's congressional race in Texas. The attitude was yes, why? Well, I said that ten years ago Dies occupied the same place in the public scene as Joe McCarthy does today — attacked and smeared.

"Then I asked Adlai whether he supported Congressman Jack Kennedy, running for the Senate in Massachusetts against Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. Again — yes, why? I said Kennedy was against the Administration's foreign policy. I was about to go on and ask him if he stood by Acheson, but one of the Stevenson friends in the press conference piped up and said, 'Thank you, Mr. Governor', thereby closing the conference. That reporter, incidentally, is from a paper supposedly supporting Ike.

"I went over to the guy and asked him what was the idea? He replied that I was asking 'dirty questions'. I reported: 'Any dirtier than Stevenson's questions to Ike about the latter's support of McCarthy and Jenner?' No answer.

"Well, I took one other aromatic memory away with me from Springfield. It was while I was listening to the conversational remarks of a high member of Adlai's campaign family. Yes, he was saying, we've done a good job of needling Ike on McCarthy and I suppose the next thing on our agenda will be to remind him of isolationist Sen. John Bricker and Ike's support for that friend of Taft. Yet, he mused, maybe we won't have to bother about that, 'we can just let the Guild take care of it'.

"I may be awfully dumb, but he could hardly have meant anything else than that members of the Newspaper Guild in the press would eagerly shoulder the burden of asking Ike how about John Bricker. In other words, certain elements in the working press corps would be self-starters in the needling. Whew! When I got to Washington I wondered why I had ever left it."

Curious Connecticut: A prevailing comment on the weirdness of politics this year is that Stevenson is running against McCarthy and Eisenhower against Truman. A correspondent writes us about the oddities and unusual pattern of the Connecticut campaign, as follows:

Governor Lodge, Republican, has just named William A. Purtell to succeed the late Sen. Brien McMahon, Democrat, to fill out the few remaining months until the new Congress meets. Purtell is also running for the seat of Senator Benton, Democrat, this year up for re-election. If Purtell should win (and he has a good chance, they say) he would thereby have seniority over other new Senators elected this year. Also, suppose Purtell is elected on November 4, 1952 — he would at once be both Senator-elect and Senator, for different seats; a rare parliamentary case. And suppose a special session were called after November 4th. Purtell would vote in the deceased McMahon's place, while on the following January 20th, he would vote from Benton's chair.

Also, Purtell is a Catholic in a state where religious and party lines are usually co-extensive (although there have been important exceptions). This means that Benton will face much Catholic anger over the smearing of McCarthy (who is expected to speak in Connecticut during the campaign); and will not be

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protected as in the last campaign, by his fellow Democrat now deceased, Sen. Brien McMahon, a Catholic. Benton is a Protestant.

But more is yet to come. For Mrs. Claire Booth Luce is running for GOP nomination for McMahon's unexpired four year term. Mrs. Luce is a recent Catholic convert. Among Democrats, a leading contender is Congressman Ribicoff, who is of the Jewish faith. Thus, in this curious year, one may yet see two Catholics — Purtell and Luce — as Senatorial candidates of a Republican party whose complexion is largely Protestant. And one Protestant, Benton, and one Jew, Ribicoff, would be the Senatorial candidates of a Democratic Party which in the state is heavily Catholic.

Hold your horses — it may not happen. For Democrats say it is not at all certain Ribicoff will get the nomination, and Republicans say Mrs. Luce may not bear the Republican standard. Democrats want someone better known than Ribicoff. And Mrs. Luce has picked up some unpopularity; during the campaign last spring, in her enthusiasm for Eisenhower, she said Taft's nomination would be "good news to Stalin". Taft supporters (some of whom have money) haven't liked that.

Anyway, this highly variegated picture of Connecticut is not complete without the one and only Vivien Kellems, who has filed as Independent Republican candidate for Senator.

The Heritage of Nuremberg: Our fliers who parachute from stricken planes over Red territory in Korea still remain liable to trial and execution if they have bombed cities, because of the perverted justice established at Nuremberg, a creation of the Roosevelt-Truman regimes. Last week, we reported this situation, as discussed by high personalities in London — Lord Hankey and the Earl of Cork and Orrery. This week, we find in the weekly magazine *Truth* (London), further remarks on the subject.

Truth comments on the Nuremberg thesis that a soldier or officer committing a "war crime" is not innocent because he takes orders from his superiors, nor even if his intent be innocent, and recalls that a German orderly was sentenced to imprisonment for carrying a lethal drug from one place to another without knowing why his medical officer wanted it. And the London weekly remarks on the "perilous position" in which men are placed if — in deference to Nuremberg law — they refuse to obey orders.

"It is possible to conceive of situations, for instance, in which a machine gun might be turned on men of one's own force seeking gratuitously to surrender, the order to fire being given in an attempt to save a desperate situation. Any machine gunner who might demur, perhaps because of a lack of appreciation of the issues involved, would not find his officer concerned to investigate the nature of his disobedience. . . . Is it fair to demand that the individual soldier, trained to obedience and unqualified to assess the merits of such problems, should have placed upon him the onus of reaching his own judgment in independence of that of his superior officers?" *Truth* concludes that today "the soldier stands the risk of being shot both for disobeying orders and for obeying orders".

Gold: Two Italians have demonstrated the fact that gold is not what governments call "money", even though it may be more desirable as a medium of exchange and a measure of value. These enterprising fellows, having moved to Switzerland, where the government does not monkey with gold, found that they could earn a profit by manufacturing gold coins, out of bullion, of the fineness and weight designated by the governments, and selling them for the paper issued by these governments. They make French "Napoleons", Mexican $10 pieces, English sovereigns that fit the legal specifications to the letter. Are they counterfeiters? The Italian government said so, and requested their extradition; the Swiss government refused the request on the ground that these Italians were not violating Swiss law.

The real "crime" of these entrepreneurs is that they are undermining the government monopoly of money. Suppose they were manufacturing American Eagles — the extinct $20 gold pieces. It is a certainty that you and I would prefer these to the $20 greenbacks which we are forced to accept as money, but which we know from experience will buy less a few years from now than they will buy today. What

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did $20 buy in 1942, as compared to 1952? Somehow we feel that the gold, which is a commodity, will ride the inflationary wave, that as the greenback dollar drops in purchasing power the old gold piece will make a corresponding rise. How do we know? From the experience of the ages: gold is gold.

But, if we all swapped our $20 greenbacks for these illegal Eagles, what would the government do with the paper? Suppose we hoarded the gold pieces and paid our taxes only in the depreciating legal tender. The government would be getting the worst of the bargain. It would be rich in paper and we would be rich in gold. That would not do. In order to protect its own interests, the government de-monetizes gold, makes it a crime to have the kind of money we all prefer, the kind that has something more substantial behind it than a politician's promise.

Modern Know-Nothingism: The owner of the drugstore-lunchroom bent over my shoulder to look. "What's that you're reading?" he asked. I closed the book so that he could see the title: *McCarthyism: The Fight for America.* The ingratiating storekeeper's smile left his face. "What's it all about?" he grunted.

"Senator McCarthy", I explained, "takes up, one by one, all the charges that have been levelled at him and gives his answers. It is more like a brief than a book. He supports every statement of fact with a notation as to his source."

The man's face grew rigid as I spoke. He could hardly contain himself. So, perversely, I remarked that I could not understand how anybody who reads this book could question the Senator's integrity — or doubt his accusation that Communists have infiltrated the State Department and have influenced our foreign policy to the detriment of this country and in favor of Soviet ambitions. "Would you like to read it?" I asked. "Baloney", he growled and walked away.

I then realized what the force behind the drive against "McCarthyism" really is. It is a peculiarity of the human mind that belies man's pretensions to educability. It is a psychological phenomenon, all too common with *homo sapiens,* consisting of a capacity to put up with an emotional barrier to fact, understanding or reason. It has nothing to do necessarily with Joe McCarthy or with the mission he has undertaken. It satisfies a human need of substituting a hatred for any exercise of rationality.

Recognizing this psychological quirk, Lenin recommended that "we can and must write in a language which sows among the masses hate, revulsion, scorn and the like, toward those who disagree with us". To the Communists, then, the campaign against "McCarthyism" is a means of accomplishing a purpose, and is quite logical. But, to the dupes, like the drugstore man, it serves as a much needed hate-satisfaction as well as sublimation of mental laziness.

The extent to which the bugaboo of "McCarthyism" has taken hold of what goes for the American mind is demonstrated in the cowardly concession to this stupidity, made by two men who, seeking the highest offices in the country, are presumed to be intelligent. Both General Eisenhower and Senator Nixon are reported to have publicly condemned McCarthy's "methods", in an effort to appease the voting morons who have swallowed the ballyhoo against "McCarthyism" in large doses. What are these "methods"? Nothing but the iteration and reiteration of the charge that Communists did infiltrate the State Department. Is it an evil to tell and repeat a truth out loud? It is significant that neither of these two men have paid their respects to the substance of McCarthy's charges. That suggests they would do well to read *McCarthyism: The Fight for America.* They might gain a few votes by asserting that they, like McCarthy, are conscious of what is going on in the State Department and are definitely opposed to it. We recommend this little book. It is published by Devin-Adair Company, 23 East 26th St., New York 10, N. Y., and sells for Fifty Cents.

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